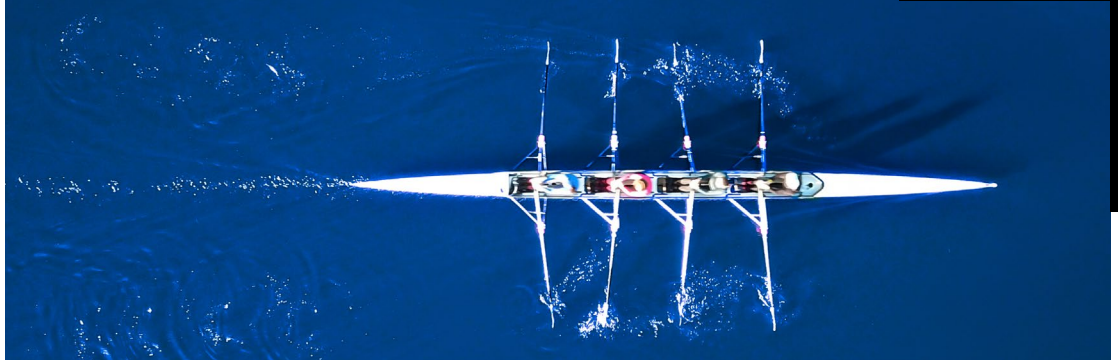




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NEWS

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

New rules on access to railway activity

Decree No. 63/2026, of 12 October

Mozambique has adopted a new regulation establishing the rules for accessing and exercising railway activities. Decree No. 63/2026 repeals, to the extent of any conflicts, the 1966 colonial-era railway regulation (Decree No. 47.043 of 7 June 1966). It introduces a comprehensive licensing and access framework for the railway sector for the first time.

The new regime regulates the management of railway infrastructure and operations, as well as a range of related services. It also introduces a dedicated safety certification system and establishes rules governing access to railway infrastructure. This reform forms part of the government's efforts to open the sector to new operators. It has ended the historical state monopoly held by Mozambique Railways (CFM) and strengthened Mozambique's position as a regional logistics and transport hub.

The new rules came into force on the date of publication, 12 October 2026.

What's new

- **A railway licensing regime now exists where none did before.** The previous regulation was built around railway concessions and operations but did not provide a licensing framework for access to railway activities. The new Regulation establishes this framework, requiring licences from the *Autoridade Reguladora* – identified in the Regulation's annexes as the Instituto Ferro-Portuário de Moçambique, IP (IFEPOM) – for railway infrastructure management, railway operations and certain connected services.

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- **Both infrastructure management and railway operations are** part of “railway activities” under the Regulation but they are licensed separately. The concept covers passenger and cargo transport services, as well as the management and maintenance of infrastructure and rolling stock, and signalling and safety systems. Conversely, a separate set of related activities that fall outside of railway activities is listed, including rolling stock manufacture, infrastructure construction, training, consultancy, and station services. The licensing regime then creates distinct licence categories for infrastructure managers and for transport operators. Infrastructure management covers the railway network itself, while railway operations cover train services, rolling stock activities and certain connected services.
- **Different railway activities now require different licences.** The new regulation establishes eleven licence categories, which cover infrastructure management and use, essential and auxiliary railway services, and passenger and cargo transport. They also cover the transport of dangerous goods, as well as the manufacture, maintenance and repair of rolling stock and railway infrastructure. Applications must be decided within 90 calendar days of the submission of complete information.
- **Safety certification becomes mandatory for key railway activities.** The new regulation introduces a dedicated railway safety certificate, which is issued in two parts: one covers the applicant’s safety management system, and the other part covers the specific technical requirements for the infrastructure in question, as set out by IFEPOM. The certificate is valid for five years, subject to annual inspections. It must be obtained before licences for railway infrastructure management and passenger or cargo transport can be issued. The regulator must decide on a certificate application within 60 days, a separate timeline to the 90-day licensing decision period.
- **The Network Directory becomes a core access document.** Infrastructure managers must publish a Network Directory containing key technical and commercial information on the railway network, including capacity, access conditions and operational restrictions. The directory must be prepared annually and submitted to the regulator by 31 August, with publication by 31 December each year.
- **A structured regime of administrative offences and fines is introduced.** The new Regulation introduces a comprehensive system of administrative offences (*contravenções*) and penalties divided into ‘very serious offences carrying fines of up to 1,200 times the minimum public-sector wage, and ‘serious offences carrying fines of up to 800 times the minimum public-sector wage. Offences covered include licensing breaches, failure to comply with regulatory requirements, discriminatory treatment of access seekers and non-compliance with regulatory decisions. Repeat offences are subject to double the applicable fine.
- **Access to railway services must be provided on a non-discriminatory basis.** Infrastructure managers must provide access to essential railway services on a non-discriminatory basis, and tariffs for essential, additional and auxiliary services must comply with criteria approved by the regulator. Auxiliary service tariffs must also comply with a tariff book approved by the regulator.

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Prospective operators, users of logistics corridors and providers of railway-related services should pay particular attention to the new licensing requirements, safety certification rules, the Network Directory framework and access conditions.

What this means for railway operators

Prospective operators, users of logistics corridors and providers of railway-related services should pay particular attention to the new licensing requirements, safety certification rules, the Network Directory framework and access conditions. Railway companies that were already established and operating when the Regulation came into force have 180 days from its publication date to comply with it. This is the first time Mozambique has had a comprehensive regulatory framework governing access to railway infrastructure and railway operations, which creates a clearer pathway for private sector participation. ■

